

IN THE CLAIMS

Please substitute claims 17-28 with the following:

1-16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently amended) A method for accounting for a fee concerning service provided to a user by a service provider to a user, comprising the steps of:

receiving from said service provider a charge collection request based on a service request sent from the user to said service provider;

informing said charge collection to the user based on said charge collection request received from said service provider; and

when an objection to the fee is received from the user, verifying validity of the charge based on said service request and digital signature generated based on said service request ~~when an objection to the fee is received from the user.~~

18. (Previously added) The method according to the claim 17, wherein the service request and the digital signature for verifying are provided from the user.

19. (Previously added) The method according to claim 18, wherein the service requests and the digital signature for verifying are provided via a storage medium connectable to a user terminal.

20. (Previously added) The method according to claim 17, wherein the service request and the digital signature for verifying are provided from the service provider.

21. (Currently amended) A system for accounting for a fee concerning service provided to a user by a service provider to a user, comprising:

means for receiving from said service provider a charge collection request based on a service request sent from the user to said service provider;

means for informing said charge collection to the user based on said charge collection request received from said service provider; and

means for verifying validity of the charge, based on said service request and digital signature generated based on said service request, when an objection to the fee is received from the user.

22. (Previously added) The system according to claim 21, wherein the service request and the digital signature for verifying are provided from the user.

23. (Previously added) The system according to claim 22, wherein the service requests and the digital signature for verifying are provided via a storage medium connectable to a user terminal.

24. (Previously added) The system according to claim 21, wherein the service request and the digital signature for verifying are provided from the service provider.

25. (Currently amended) A system for accounting for a fee concerning service provided to a user by a service provider to a user, comprising:

an accounting terminal for receiving from said service provider a charge collection request based on a service request sent from the user to said service provider, wherein the accounting terminal

informs said charge collection to the user based on said charge collection request received from said service provider, and

when an objection to the fee is received from the user, verifies validity of the charge based on said service request and digital signature generated based on said service request when an objection to the fee is received from the user.

26. (Previously added) The system according to claim 25, wherein the service request and the digital signature for verifying are provided from the user.

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27. (Previously added) The system according to claim 26, wherein the service requests and the digital signature for verifying are provided via a storage medium connectable to a user terminal.

28. (Previously added) The system according to claim 25, wherein the service request and the digital signature for verifying are provided from the service provider.